

REMARKS

Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1-21, 25, and 26 will be pending in the application.

Applicants note that the Examiner indicated that original claims 24 and 29 contain allowable subject matter. The subject of these claims has been further incorporated into the amended claims 10, 14, 18, 19, 20, and 25 as proposed during the phone interview. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments made at this time (changing “not lower than” to “larger than”) should be entered to place the claims in immediate condition for allowance. The Examiner has already searched and considered the amended subject matter based upon his earlier indication of allowability of original claims 24 and 29.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections detailed in the Office Action.

ELECTION/RESTRICTION

Applicants confirm the election of Group II. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application for the non-elected claims.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 10-11, 14-15, 18 and 19 are rejected as being anticipated by Satoru Kamitani (JP 09213777 or US 6028762).

Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn in light of the claim amendments. The cited prior art fails to depict a “stepped portion having a height greater than that of said protrusions.”

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action sets forth the following obviousness rejections:

- 1) claims 12, 13, 16, 17, 21, and 26 are rejected as being unpatentable in view of Kamitani and Grimard (US 5,903,428);
- 2) claim 20 is rejected based on Kamitani and Kitabayashi (US 5,530,616);
and
- 3) claim 25 is rejected based on Kamitani and Kamide.

Applicants respectfully submit that the aforementioned rejections should be withdrawn. Independent claims 14, 19, 20, and 25 detail allowable features. Hence, they and their resulting dependant claims are allowable.

The cited prior art fails to teach, hint, or suggest the claimed invention to one of ordinary skill in the prior art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants await allowance of the application. If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this amendment, such as fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300. Any overpayment can be credited to Deposit Account No. 02-4300.

Respectfully submitted,

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Signature:



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